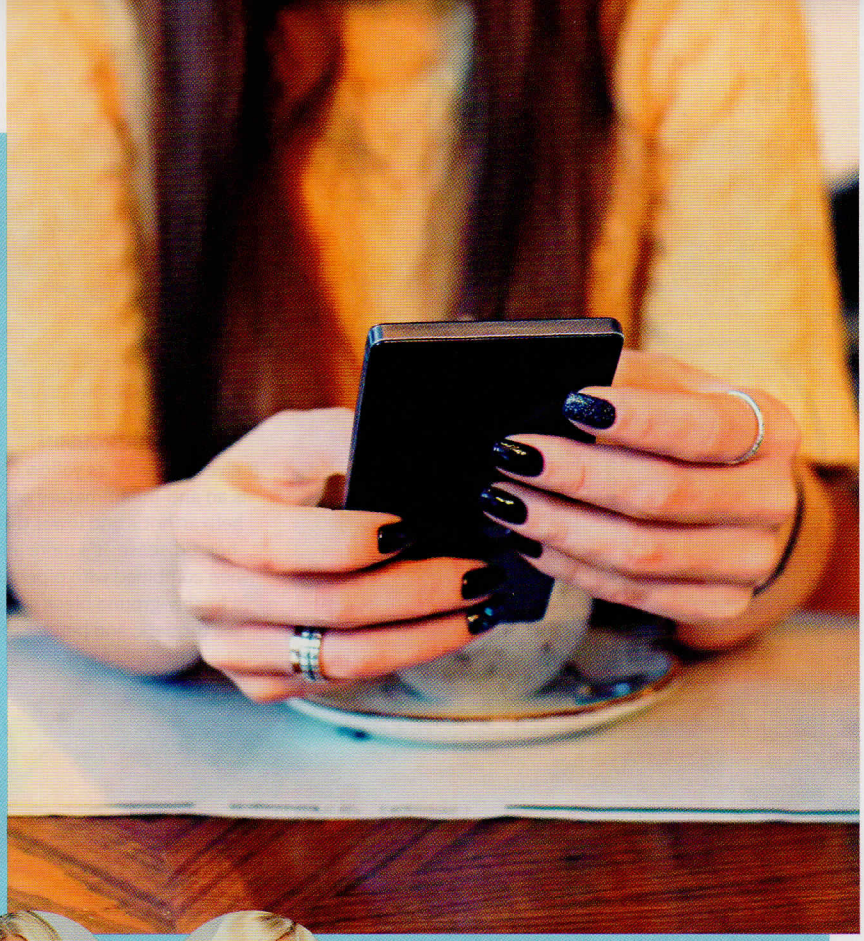
IT TAKES TWO



Q I've been single for a while and want to try dating this summer. I downloaded an app, but is there anything else I should do to prepare myself?

Bea Hambley, Canterbury

WELLBEING
Deborah Smith

STYLE
Sophie Stevens

A Before you begin your dating journey, make the decision to love and accept yourself for the person you are. If this is something you need to work on, start by listing the positive things about yourself and celebrating them regularly.

While eating well and being active is key to physical and mental health, it's important to do things that make you feel good too, like treating yourself to a gift-box subscription or pursuing a hobby. These things cultivate self-confidence, which not only helps you get out there and meet new people, but also makes you attractive to others.

When it comes to online dating, start as you mean to go on. Be honest – a profile doesn't need to be long, but it should convey what's important to you. Also include up-to-date photos of you feeling your best. It's tempting to tweak photos using a filter or app, but it could lead to anxiety before a date IRL; embrace the real you.

Catfishing is something to be aware of too; unfortunately some people build a profile using fake photos and info. So, if you're ready to chat on the phone or in person and they make excuses, move on.

It's important to clarify your boundaries. Think about the kind of relationship you want and ask anyone you're interested in to tell you what they're looking for too.

When you take the next step, stay safe by arranging a date in a public place, and share your plans with a friend who'll check in on you afterwards.

Lastly, be kind to yourself. Anyone worth pursuing will like you the way you are right now. I wish you the best of luck!

Gift box subscription, **£22.95** per month, Moi-Même Luxe

A When you're getting back into dating, pampering yourself and looking good on the outside can go a long way to helping you feel more confident on the inside.

You don't have to spend a fortune on a new wardrobe. Small touches, like on-trend pompom earrings, a yellow snakeskin bag, or even a new lipstick, can have a big impact and boost your self-esteem.

Think about the smaller details too, like a fresh new nail varnish. It doesn't matter whether you wear a bold or neutral shade; it's about looking polished and feeling sexy!

£30 (size 8-24), Tu at Sainsbury's

Think about where you'll be going on a date, and put together a look that will make you feel good, but also be appropriate. You wouldn't feel comfortable in a dress if you spend your date hiking, just as you wouldn't want to rock up to a fancy restaurant wearing casual trousers and trainers.

So what to wear? Jumpsuits are huge this summer. They're a great alternative to a dress and come in lots of gorgeous fabrics, colours and patterns. They're easy to dress up with heels, or dress down with sandals or trainers. Utility is another trend for summer – you'll find it in dresses, shirts and jackets – and it gives off a smart, confident vibe. Alternatively, splash out on a new top in a strong print or a zesty shade and team it with your favourite trousers.

Most importantly, don't wear something that isn't you, as you won't feel your best. Clothes say a lot about who we are, so while it's good to make an effort, stay true to yourself.

Find out more about Deborah at: growyourownhappiness.com